[English]

Closure of Mines

2135. *SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE:* Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any directions have been issued by the District Collector to close all such mines which fall under the forest area of district Satna in Madhya Pradesh ;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ; and

(c) the reaction of the Central Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) and (b) The Hon'ble Supreme Court vide its order dated 12.12.1996 has directed all the State Governments to ensure cessation of all non-forest activities, including mining, which had been going on in forest land without the prior approval of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. As per the information received from the State Forest Department, on the directions of the District Collector to Divisional, Forest Officer, Satna for compliance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court Orders, the Forest Department has closed down 40 such mines so far.

(c) Under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, no non-forest activity can be permitted on forest land without the prior approval of the Central Government.

[Translation]

Categories of Scheduled Castes

2136. SHRI TILAK RAJ SINGH : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh High Court has quashed the order of the State Government Dividing the Scheduled Castes into four categories;

(b) if so, the salient features of the order issued by the State Government and the broad features of the ruling given by the High Court in this regard;

(c) whether the Union Government are contemplating to take any *suo moto* action for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes in view of the ruling of the High Court;

(d) if so, the details thereof ; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA : (a) to (e) Information is being collected from the Government of Andhra Pradesh and the same will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

National Institute of Research on Jute and Allied Fibre Technology

2137. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN :
SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Institute of Research on Jute and Allied Fibre Technology (NIRJAFT) is the pioneering Institute for technological research in jute and allied fibre; and

(b) if so, the details of major achievements made by the Institute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Major achievements of the institute are :

1. Grading of raw jute, which has been accepted as the basis for quality evaluation of raw jute by Bureau of Indian Standards (IS:271-1975).

2. Development of grading aids such as graded jute album and jute sample boxes.

3. Upgradation of low quality barky jute by a specific fungal culture for the benefit of jute growers and jute industry at large.

4. Bacterial cultures for accelerating jute retting.

5. Chemical and microbiological degumming of ramie.

6. Development of jute ribboner machine for retting of jute in a smaller volume of water.

7. Development of small scale jute spinning plant.

8. Development of various testing and processing instruments and equipment namely, bundle strength tester, air flow fineness meter, bulk density meter, colour and lustre meter, yarn hairiness meter etc.

9. Development of different jute based/jute polypropylene blended products such as, book binding cloth, decrative fabric, union fabric, high performance jute fabric, carpets, "Caplon" blankets etc.

10. Development of technology of (a) wrap spun, (b) twin spun and (c) core spun yarn for value-added products.

11. Development of non-wovens suitable for canal lining, agricultural mulch and also for making fabric to control soil erosion.

12. Particle board and pulp and paper from jute sticks.

Price Rise due to Export of Rice

2138. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the export of rice results price rise in the domestic market; and

(b) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANS PRASAD SINGH) : (a) and (b) Export of non-basmati rice of common consumption may lead to rise in the price of rice in the domestic market. A proposal to place non-basmati rice in the restricted list is under the Government's consideration.

Misuse of Central Assistance Meant for Cyclone

2139. SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the Government of Andhra Pradesh has misused cylone funds;

(b) if so, the total amount allocated to the State Government for providing relief to the cyclone victims ;

(c) the amount out of it distributed among the victims and the amount still unspent with the State Government ;

(d) whether the Union Government have obtained the details from the State Government about the use of funds which were provided for cyclone victims;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the action taken by the Government in this regard.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) No report has been received about misuse of funds released by the Government of India to the Government of Andhra Pradesh for relief measures in the wake of cyclone of October-November, 1996.

(b) to (f) Government of India had released R. 142.00 crores to the Government of Andhra Pradesh from the National Fund for Calamity Relief in the wake of cyclones of October-November, 1996, in addition to Rs. 93.14 crores released as Central share of the State Calamity Relief Fund for 1996-97. According to the reports received from the State Government, the entire funds have been utilised.

Forest Cover

2140. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether according to a recent study, only 8% of the landmass of the capital is green;

(b) if so, the other facts brought out in the study ; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) Delhi has 1.7% of the geographical area under forest cover as per State of Forest Report, 1995 published by Forest Survey of India.

(b) and (c) Out of total 26 sq.km area under forest cover, 16 sq.km. is having dense forest and 10 sq.km area comprises of open forest. There has been an increase of 4 sq.km of forest cover between 1993 and 1995 assessments of forest cover. The increase is due to plantations.

[Translation]

Productivity of Farms of Various Institutions under ICAR

2141. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the institutes under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research have thousands of acres of farms;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) if so, whether the productivity of these farms is satisfactory ;

(d) if so, the area of farms under the agriculture and veterinary institutes and the details of products produced in these farms during the last three years, year-wise; alongwith the amount incurred on these farms annually; and

(e) the manner in which the utilisation of such big farms could be made to mobilise more resources for these institutes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI) : (a) Sir, the Institutes under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research have the land area ranging from 0.27 ha. to 2961 ha.

(b) the names of the Institutes and the area of their research farms are given in the attached Statement.

(c) Productivity of research farms is satisfactory.

(d) Information as desired is being collected.

(e) Revolving Fund Scheme is being given to the Institutes for multiplication of seed/ planting material/prototype for resource generation.